

# THE SPARK GAP

THE OFFICAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MID-STATE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

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## Indianapolis Tornadoes

Jack Parker W8ISH

Strong storms with funnel clouds raced across Indiana during the Memorial Day holiday forcing thousands of Indianapolis residents and race fans alike to take shelter from tornadoes. Forecasters warned Johnson county about threatening cells in the northwest part of the county. Ernest -KB9SKI established a severe weather net. Fortunately, we escaped the destructive winds

Jack -W8ISH was visiting relatives southwest of Bedford and began chasing dangerous cells that hit the southern Indiana towns of Marengo, Spencer and Elliottsville. Jack captured the damage left behind in Elliottsville for WISH TV and then sped north to follow the Marion county tornadoes. Using the Marion county net Jack reported the first touchdown hear I-465 and Mann road. He followed the twister across the southside and was the first on the scene when 41 residents of a Keystone Avenue nursing home where hit by the two block wide funnel cloud. They were left homeless but fortunately only reported three injuries.

For the city of Indianapolis, the Race Day storms could not have happened at a worse time. Hundreds of thousands of people were in town for the 88th running of the Indianapolis 500 mile race and for the NBA Playoff game between the Indiana Pacers and the Detroit Pistons. The rain delayed race was nearing the end when race officials threw out the checkered flag and warned nearly 400 thousand race fans to immediately take shelter.

According to early reports an F2 tornado passed just south of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and began its destructive path across the south and east side of Marion county. Hundreds of central Indiana amateur radio operators were kept busy from Sunday morning until late Sunday evening tracking the funnel clouds and reporting ground truth observations back to the National Weather Service office in Indianapolis.

While the Pacers took on the Detroit Pistons, tornado sirens blared outside, motorists got stuck in traffic jams, and tree limbs and debris were tossed into roadways. Downed power lines, flooded streets and massive amounts of debris from damaged homes made it difficult for Indianapolis police and fire personnel to reach those in need.

According to the National Weather Service eleven tornadoes had touched down in 10 Indiana counties. This was the third time in three years that powerful tornadoes have

ripped across central and southern Indiana. -w8ish

## **JOHNSON COUNTY RACES A.D.R.T. EXERCISE**

As disasters go, it was about average. June 2<sup>nd</sup> just before 11 a.m. members of the Franklin fire department, ADRT and RACES responded to the report of a hazardous chemical spill with multiple injuries at the Johnson county fair grounds. When rescue workers arrived they found an overturned car and several victims including dogs and a horse. An invisible cloud of toxic chlorine gas made the incident even more deadly.

In a rare scenario members of the Animal Disaster Rescue Team rushed in to administer first aid to the human and animal victims. Three human victims were quickly stabilized at the scene and transferred to the decontamination tent set up by the Franklin fire department. They were later sent to Johnson county hospital for further evaluation. The dogs and their handlers were decontaminated on site and sent to a local veterinarian for further treatment. The horse was taken by trailer to the Indiana state veterinary clinic for observation. Nearly two dozen ADRT members responded to the hazmat incident.

Twelve Johnson county RACES members responded to the scene to provide emergency communications. Jack Parker-W8ISH established an Incident Command at the fair grounds and directed the amateur radio operators to work with the triage, hazmat, logistics, decontamination and medical sectors. Paul Hise-AA9GY and Dave Wendt-KA9OOH were dispatched to the Johnson Memorial Hospital to for patient tracking. Jay Chrisman-AA9YP and Dennis McKendree-KB9RWS served as liaison with the medical and decontamination teams. Herschel Saylor-WD9GMM and his daughter Amber worked the hot zone providing communications. Stephen Ivins-KC9FCX and Brenda Haler-KC9EBL, both members of ADRT, served double duty as rescuers and communications personnel. Jim Kerr-N1IU and Tom Achors -KB9RBB were used as runners at the Incident Site. Newly licensed amateur Linda Harshberger-KC9GCH worked with Jack at Incident Command keeping track of event times and assignments. Matt Payne-KB9UJE coordinated all sites from the EOC. Bonnie Halcomb-W9BXP was the only ham radio operator at the scene who could not talk. She suffered respiratory failure and a fractured arm and leg as a result of the accident. According to the latest report Bonnie has fully recovered from her simulated injuries.

This was the first disaster exercise planned and coordinated by ADRT with cooperation from Johnson county RACES and Franklin fire department personnel. According to Emergency Management Director, Tug Sutton, everyone did a professional job of dealing

with the mock disaster scenario.

..... Jack, W8ISH

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## **CONGRATULATIONS TO NEW HAMS!!!!**

KC9FXR – Steven Ivins

KC9GCN – Janey Pemberton

KC9GCH - Linda Harshbarger

KC9GCV – Tom Pennington

KC8GCW – D. L. Bolin

KC9GCX – Gary Gallinger

KC9GCY – Bill Dotson

KC9GCZ – Kim Davin

The call signs and names listed above were students in the Spring Tech Class that was held at the Greenwood Public Library and sponsored by the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club. Listen for these folk's call signs on the club repeater and other repeaters in the area and welcome them to amateur radio.

It has also been learned that MARC member Bonnie Halcomb – W9BXP has up graded to General Class, Congratulations Bonnie!

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## **MARC YOUR CALENDAR**

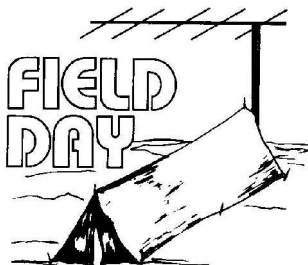
- **JUNE 26**                      **Greenwood Fire Department Health and Safety Fair**
- **Ham radio demo**
- **JUNE 26 & 27**    **FIELD DAY 2004 Camp Atterbury**
- **AUGUST 7**            **Flat Rock Run 7K marathon**
- **SEPT. 25**            **Greenwood Marching Band Invitational**

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### **FIELD DAY WILL SOON BE HERE** ***YOUR HELP IS NEEDED !!!***

Plans for the multi-county 2004 Field Day are beginning to solidify. MARC F. D. chairman JR Osborne-KB9HSE has reserved the south meeting room at the Johnson county Park office in Camp Atterbury. This is the same location, minus the kitchen facilities, we have used over the past several years.

Plans for food and special ceremonies are being worked out. JR still needs volunteers to help coordinate the weekend events. Contact him at 565-3922 or at [Doublegoofballs@wmconnect.com](mailto:Doublegoofballs@wmconnect.com).

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Do you have any ham radio equipment you would like to sell or trade? You can place a free ad in the Spark Gap to help find a good home for your excess radios etc.

It's easy, contact Bob [n9siu@yahoo.com](mailto:n9siu@yahoo.com) by July 3 and your ad will be in the next issue.

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Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets at 0800 EST the third Saturday of each month at the Johnson County Law Enforcement Center in the Emergency Operations Center. All hams are encouraged to attend this meeting and VE testing is held January through November after the meeting has ended.

MARC operates the 146.835 MHz (151.4 PL) repeater and all hams are welcome to use it.

For more information please visit our club web page at: <http://www.midstatehams.org>